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AUTHOR King, Robert W.
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ABSTRACT

To examine the differences and the unique qualities of third grade writers in relation to their uses of language and their perception of the world, a selection of writings from 20 third grade students was analyzed for language ability as measured by words per T-unit. Then, two students from the higher and two from the lower end of the scale were chosen for a more in-depth, qualitative study. It was hypothesized that the children's perceptions of, and perspectives on, the world as revealed in their writings would account for their language ability as measured by quantitative meanings. Data analysis revealed that all four children displayed distinct differences in perspective on the world, which was a more significant factor in their writing than syntactic maturity or general language ability. Each child used those language structures that seemed to have personal relevance, indicating that style is a reflection of relationship to the world. (Examples of children's writings are included.) (Author/HOD)

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food! Last week they ran out of food so they were going hungry. They went out into the wilderness and saw a man with a rifle. They stayed in the weeds for a long time. All of a sudden there was a loud cra

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Dr. Robert W. King
Prof. English/Education
Center for Teaching and Learning
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota, 58202

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WHAT CHILDREN WRITE : A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Robert King
Center for Teaching and Learning
University of North Dakota

SUMMARY:

PURPOSE: To examine the differences and the uniquenesses of four third-grade writers in relation to their uses of language and their perception of the world.

METHOD: A group of writings from twenty third-graders were analyzed for language ability as measured by words per T-unit (independent clauses and their modifiers). Two students from the higher and two from the lower end of the scale were chosen for a more in-depth, qualitative study.

HYPOTHESIS: Children's perceptions of, and perspectives on, the world as revealed in a qualitative study of their writings will account for their language ability measured by quantitative meanings.

FINDINGS: All four children reveal distinct differences in perspective on the world which is a more significant factor in their writing than syntactic maturity or general language ability. Each child uses those language structures which seem to have personal relevance: style is a reflection of relationship to the world.

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GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE QUESTION

In dealing with writing we are confronted with the junctions and disjunctions of the inner and the outer world of an individual: in this case, what a child has in mind to say and what is ultimately said. This dualism in approaching writing is seen clearly in two literary critical tendencies, the biographical inclination toward interpreting a text in light of knowledge or conjectures about an author's life and the so-called New Criticism which treats the poem as an autonomous "text," existing mainly within itself as an object of study. In schooling, less formalized tendencies exist which also show this dualism: one finds teachers who assign "creative writing" as a sort of unsupervised play, feeling it should neither be graded, a correct assumption, nor studied seriously, an incorrect one; one also finds those who judge a piece of writing for mechanics or style against an abstract model or other students' work, finding it, as a single, isolated piece, to be successful or unsuccessful against that measure.

There is an answer as to whether writing should be treated as internal or external, and it is the most difficult easy answer to give: it should be treated as both, as an external expression and reflection of processes within the writer. This answer is difficult to apply to adult literature; it is extremely difficult to apply with young writers who may be kept from full expression by technical or syntactical matters as yet beyond their control.

What does the statement "My cat's name is Fluffy" mean to a given child-writer? It is hard to say. In one case, the child may be practicing the simple sentence or the use of the possessive, the content not being particularly significant. In another case, applying Piagetian theory about name-object relationships in children's thinking, we may find that the sentence is extremely complex and revelatory. What to do in any given case is hard to discover. We have to apply our knowledge of the child, the context of the writing, and, indeed, our own perceptions and perspectives in order to reach some halfway satisfactory truths.

One way to understand this juncture of the inner and the outer which writing represents is simply to ask the child. Some researchers are using pre-writing and post-writing interviews as a way of findint out what the child wants to do, is wanting to do, or wanted to do in a piece of writing. Other ways of understanding have involved direct observation, either by person or videotape, to note the hesitations, interruptions, stops and periods of fluency characteristic of physical behavior in writing.

In this study I am examining only the written product of a few children. The reader will find a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in this study, but the goal has been a qualitative one: to describe an individual child's writing in terms of its meaning to that child and for that child.

We know, or suspect, that there is a connection between thinking and writing which extends beyond the "written thinking" concept. Kellogg Hunt, in his Differences in Grammatical Structures Written At Three Grade Levels (1964), noted that "When" clauses were a

favorite of fourth graders but dropped in frequency after that grade. "If" clauses, on the other hand, increased sharply in the twelfth grade and Hunt found himself tempted to speculate a shift away from time-orientation to an if-then mode in the students' thinking. Hunt's project was not set up to study this speculation, but we would not be surprised to find that certain types of thinking are related to certain types of syntactical structures that vary between age-levels.

A more startling, and more individually oriented, conclusion comes from Joan Vesper. She gave ten college teachers fourteen pieces of two children's writing collected from age 4 to age 11. Independently of each other, the readers achieved 80% accuracy in ascribing a given writing or drawing to its proper author. Vesper grouped the readers' criteria, gathered from their comments on how they reached a decision, into five categories: Order, Purpose, Distance, Language, and Topics. The readers' comments suggested to Vesper that a recognizable style in writing was an outgrowth of individual patterns of thinking, individual ways of dealing with and relating to the world. These perceptual habits, these styles, were evident in children's very first compositions.

Vesper has suggested of young children, then, what Merleau-Ponty, the French phenomenologist, suggests about the world: that things and people have a "style" which is the manifestation of outward behavior and innerness intertwined. This consistency of appearance is rooted in the physicality of the world and yet transcends pure physical presentation, he has claimed. I would

suggest, applying this to writing, that style, broadly taken, is rooted in the physical presence of written structures and yet transcends the mere grammatical presence of a certain structure. "Personality" is another Pontian term but, like "style," it may mislead us if we think of style as outward and personality as inward. I am neither exploring the presence of literary mannerisms in children's work and calling it style, nor theorizing on the inner psychology of the children as if I have discovered their personalities.

I have studied these few works of eight and nine year olds to show the unique way each approaches the world: what he or she notices about the world as being inextricably connected with how he or she expresses that noticing.

METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

In this study I was interested both in what children put in their writings which reflected their interests, their perspectives, their world-view, and in how these perspectives were expressed in matters of style, vocabulary, and syntactical choices. I was, then, looking both at quantitative and qualitative issues.

To begin with, I "counted"--numbers of adjectives of adjectives, prepositional phrases, time-markers, numbers of sentences used to describe, numbers of sentences used to further action, and the like. From time to time I refer to those numbers in this study and I think they have some relevance wherever they are referred to.

After that phase, I tried to become immersed in each child's writings, reading and re-reading, copying the writings, and reflecting. I attempted some structural, almost "literary," criticism in my notes. I realized that working with "The Hunters" was different than working with a story called "The Hunters" by Jon. I remembered my irritation as an English teacher when a student didn't remember the name of the author; it seemed to me important that it was Hemingway's "The Killers" and not just a story called "The Killers." I attempted to read these pieces enough so that the phrase "Celia's The Cat and the Gerbil" summoned up a feeling and a recollection that I have, for example, with the phrase "Hemingway's Soldier's Home."

I continued to compare, reading all of the students' narratives, then all of their free-writings. Again, I went through one student's writings. I also did a number of spot checks. When I found something

in Kevin's writing, I went back and looked for that same thing in the others' writing to see if it was unique to Kevin or shared with his peers. It would occur to me each time that a quantitative study could be done on that aspect (initial clauses compared to terminal clauses, for example) but each time what was significant was what was unique to that writer; it could not be used as a predictor for what I would find as significant in the next.

I also found it helpful to attempt rewriting students' sentences. A few references are made in this study to such a practice and I found it illuminating a number of times. It is one thing to characterize a child's sentence as "simple" in grammar and hope for more sophisticated structures; it was another thing to try out what those structures would look like and compare them to the original. I sometimes found out that the child was trying to push toward those more complicated structures; at other times I found that the child's sentence seemed, upon reflection and after trying alternatives, to be "the best way" to put it.

In the final stages of this writing, I found that coining descriptive phrases for each writer was extremely helpful. Such a personal way of identifying students--Celia, the struggling writer; Ben, the methodical mathematician--helped me get a stronger grasp on the characteristics of each student while allowing change and flexibility in my judgments. Such categorization as is implied by these descriptive phrases is not, I think, a pigeon-holing of students for they are phrases of uniqueness to be used in discovering the individual, not predetermined categories of judgment.

DESCRIPTION OF ORIGINAL DATA-GATHERING

Within a period of one month, six writings were collected from 60 students in the third grade, 30 in the fifth, and 30 in the sixth from one school in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Teachers working with the researcher helped solicit and obtain the data.

The six writings assigned were intended to cover a variety of genre as several studies within and across grade-level were planned.

Writing #1: "A Most Important Day"

Students were instructed to write about "a most important day" in their lives. Each teacher introduced the assigment as she wanted to, but few specific suggestions were given. Focusing on one day, it was hoped, would curtail narrative and bring out some expository skills of the writers.

Writing #2: "Animal Story"

The instructions were "Write a story about two animals."

Writing #3: "People Story"

The instructions were "Write a story about two people that have a conflict or a problem." Both #2 and #3 were considered as literary narratives, as "creative writing" in the sense of narrative fiction.

Writings #4 and #5: "Free-Writing"

On two separate occasions, students were instructed to write on any subject or subjects that came to mind for a period of 10 minutes without long pauses for thinking.

Writing #6: "I would..."

Students were asked to brainstorm individually and list three things that would make the upcoming summer "better." Suggestions did not need to be realistic or possible. They were then asked to select one of those and write about it, explaining why it would be "neat." Somewhat expository, this assignment took on a persuasive aspect as students gave reasons for their choice.

In all of the above, no particular audience was suggested. The normal expectations of teachers and students, whatever they might have been, for such a situation was allowed to continue.

For this particular study, twenty students were randomly selected from the third grade, and a T-unit analysis (words per number of independent clause with modifiers and subordinations of that clause) was performed on each piece. Students were then ranked and four students were chosen for this study, two from the highest rankings and two from the lowest.

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KEVIN

tried riding it, then I guess my wish came true, I finally could ride a bike! I still had to learn how to do curves and other bike tricks because if I didn't I probably would have had a bad accident! My brother taught me the tricks. I could finally have some way to get around!!

Kevin: An Important Day

In 1982 my mom and I went to get a bike for me.
We both went to a store and bought a good bike
that was called "Wild West."
The next day I tried riding it.
Then I guess my wish came true.
I finally could ride a bike.
I still had to learn how to do curves and other
bike tricks because if I didn't I probably would
have had a bad accident!
My brother taught me the tricks.
I could finally have some way to get around.

Kevin: "Two Friends"

One time in 1980 there were two pets who escaped
from a farm.
One was a raccoon
the other was a bear.
They found a dark deserted cave.
It had a great big sack filled with food.
Last week they ran out of food so they were going
hungry.
They went out into the wilderness and saw a
man with a rifle.
They stayed in the weeds for a long time.
All of a sudden there was a loud crack
of a rifle.
There about an inch from them they saw a tiger
quickly they dragged him away
but there they saw a guy that looked like their
master
and it was!
Their master took them home
and (from then on) they were two friends!!
that had food to eat! and slept on nice fresh hay!

Kevin: "The Good One"

One summer day (name) and I were going to the lake!
Now the place we were at was a nice place
to fish and swim and sail
and it was running fast waters!!
We were going to build a raft
so we built one and took a great big tool box
We started sailing and ran into fast waters.
the tools slid off into the water
and we ran into a huge rock in the water
it loosened the raft
and we all of sudden boom!
we hit a small island
it would take days before we could get back!
We could swim back but not against those waters!
The next day my dad came and took us home and
built a good raft named The Good One!

KEVIN: THE PERSONAL REALIST

I will deal here with Kevin's two fictional narratives and his "most important day" writing. As with the other writers here, these three pieces generally seem the most interesting. The two free-writings (#4 and #5) proved to be helpful for discovering children's spontaneous subjects and occasional syntactic structures; the expository/persuasive #6 tended to yield the highest words per T-unit for all twenty writers in the original group--as indeed it does with Kevin--but this seems to be more a matter of the "I want to do this because..." construction implied by the assignment rather than anything more personal to the students.

Kevin is at the higher end of the spectrum as far as syntactical fluency is concerned with 9 words per T-unit as his overall average. Like most of the other students, his narrations were his longest pieces, and his T-unit rating shorter than his expositions.

At first glance Kevin appears to carve out a calmer existence than his peers. His "important day" (in contrast to Celia's and Ben's hospitalizations and Jon's birth) is the buying of a new bicycle. His story involving two people does not represent gang-life (like Jon's), does not contain imaginative extrapolations (Celia's two boys who go to jail for not paying taxes), and does not concern life and death matters (Ben's account of a near

drowning): it describes two boys building a raft and getting into trouble because of it. Kevin's story of animals, like Ben's, involves their simply getting lost.

Nevertheless, within this fairly calm and familiar view of the world, Kevin has an eye for realistic detail, for specificity, that sets him apart from the other writers and contributes to our understanding of how he views the world.

"TWO FRIENDS"

In his animal narrative, Kevin establishes a specific time ("One time in 1980"--one of the few uses of dates in all the writers and the only one used in a fictional narrative), the characters and a situation (escaping from a farm) in the first T-unit. He specifies his characters further, as raccoon and bear, in the second and third unit and gets them to a cave with food by unit four.

For some reason Kevin does not want to leave the events back "in 1980." He may have some idea of how long he believes the animals can live on the food in the cave or he may feel the need to bring us almost up to the present as the time of his narrative but, in any case, he begins the actual story-problem with "Last week they ran out of wood so they were going hungry." Now the actual narrative of the problem can begin, about 40% into the sotyr, a percentage roughly the same in all writers.

The next few sentences contain both realistic and vivid detail:

They stayed in the weeds for a long time. All
of a sudden there was a loud crack of a rifle.
There about an inch from them they saw a tiger.
Quickly they dragged him away.

The realistic specificity of "stayed in the weeds" for what might be more generally or simply said by another child as "They hid" shows one of Kevin's strengths. The adjective and onomatopoetic noun of "loud crack" contribute to this specific realism. Admittedly, the "loud crack of a rifle" is not an uncommon phrase in adult speech or writing, but it is uncommon in these writings; the point is not so much whether Kevin personally invents this observation but that it is personally used. Furthermore, "about an inch from them" clearly comes from Kevin's excited imagination and his attempt in writing to portray that vivid specificity. "Quickly," although not remarkable as an introductory adverb in itself, is unusual in this group of writings as, indeed, are adverbs in general.

It is interesting to note, since T-unit length was the first reason for selecting Kevin, that the above sentences I have selected for their literary effectiveness are not the sentences which account for his higher T-unit rating. The last sentence with its 19 words and a subordinate clause, the first sentence with its 13 words and final subordinate clause, and the compound predicate of the seventh unit are more important as "long" T-units, although they too--and particularly the prepositional phrases of "out into the wilderness and saw a man with a rifle"--contain examples of Kevin's eye for specificity and detail.

Kevin's descriptive adjectives are significant here. Adjective usage is infrequent in these students' writings, whether narrative or expository, and is often limited to value characteristics (nice, mean, good, bad) so that it comes as a slight surprise to note Kevin's "dark, deserted cave," "great big sack" and "nice fresh hay." Now, the paired use of adjectives, and the adjectives themselves, tend to be usual from an adult point of view, if not redundant. "Dark" is not needed, for example, to separate it from a "lighted" cave, and "great big" is certainly a child-favored redundancy. "Nice fresh hay" also has the tone of an adult cliche about it, but Kevin is using these phrases, whether they are originally perceived or in the process of being internalized from adult speech and writing. Most of the other writers do not use them.

Another indicator of Kevin's specificity is his use of prepositional phrases, a grammatical unit which tends to specify location of action or accompanying detail. Prepositional phrases in "Two Friends" account for almost 1/4 of the total words. Words used as time-markers, adjectives, prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses account for 57% of the total words in this narrative, higher than other students. The closest would be Celia with an above 50% rating in two of her writings, but she relies more on subordinate clauses where Kevin uses prepositional phrases.

"THE GOOD ONE"

Earlier I mentioned the content of this story, two boys making a raft, and juxtaposed it with the urban violence of Jon's "Mean

and Smart" or the imagination of Celia's "Jason and Jack," underscoring the normality of his subject matter. Kevin, however, brings enough informed perception and remembered detail to his narrative to make it worth studying.

To begin with, we have to notice the title. Most of the other children's titles are simply paired names or generalizations, like Kevin's own "Two Friends." Most of the titles, except for Jon's "Mean and Smart," could have been written before much of an idea of the story was in the writer's head. Since "The Good One" is the name of the second raft, built in the final sentence of the story, Kevin's title indicates a prior and specific knowledge of what the story will entail.

The story can be divided into three sections: the establishing of time, characters, and place; the main adventure itself; and the conclusion, the father helping build the raft of the title. But the first and third sections occupy one sentence each. The others are all concerned with--we could even say specifically focused on--the central event. This type of focusing is infrequent in the stories of the other writers.

I've called Kevin a realist, and in part because this narrative seems obviously about a real event. Taking a "tool box" along on a raft, serving no purpose in the story--or, indeed, on rafts--sounds like something that actually happened, something a young child would do as part of the adventure of building one's own raft. The fact that the tool box slides off into the water, another part of the disaster, shows that it is definitely a remembered

detail. Furthermore, "The Good One" is one of the few narratives that uses a first-person point of view, and an actual classmate's name is given as the other character.

Kevin's vivid expressiveness is shown in this story as well. I find Kevin tryigg to be expressively real in his account of what happens to a raft when it hits a huge rock: "It loosened the raft." In trying to write about this event myself, I was at a loss to paraphrase that verb. "We all of a sudden boom! we hit a small island" shows a vividness and excitement that reveals Kevin's strenths in recalling the energy of the moment.

With that last quoted sentence, let me digress a moment to make another comment on T-unit analysis. I have counted this statement as two T-units, taking the second "we" as the beginning of a new main clause and, necessarily, taking "boom!" to be a verb substitute. It could as easily be counted as one T-unit by regarding "boom" as an interruptive sound-effect and the second "we" as a mere memory lapse, a repetition. In this case, Kevin's rating would rise from 9.28 to 10.0 which "looks" substantially higher. Such experiences have cautioned me about the value of T-unit ratings regarding one piece of writing or one writer. So little can make so much difference on this scale that such analysis seems to be useful only in the broadest of quantitatitive studies where it can give only the most general kind of information.

Returning to the text, we find another example of Kevin's

descriptive use of language: "We could swim back but not against those waters!" This statement, using "those," has the effect of Kevin actually pointing. When I try to rephrase that sentence ("but we could not swim against those waters," "but the waters were too fast," or "but then we decided not to") I realize that the second half of Kevin's sentence captures the presentness of the experience. With its assumed subject and verb, it is an incomplete phrase which serves as the emphatic answer to a question: Can we swim back? Not against <u>those</u> waters!

The use of compound predicates is another language strength of Kevin's and shows his ability to connect actions and things. Such sentences as "We built one and took a great big tool box" and "We started sailing and ran into fast waters," as well as the long, concluding, three-part-predicate sentence shows Kevin's perception of the realistic connections between events. With three such sentences in this narrative and one in "Two Friends," Kevin's usage is close to Celia's, three such sentences in all her writing. Neither Jon nor Ben use this construction at all.

In "The Good One," we again find Kevin's use of adjectives to be significant. Although they are not as vividly descriptive as in "Two Friends," there are eight of them, a much higher frequency than in any of the other writers.

OTHER WRITINGS

In Kevin's "most important day" writing, we find some of the same elements present as in his others. Although we do not

find the unusually vivid details or adjectives, we have the specificity of a date, the model name of the bicycle, and a 26-word T-unit that is fairly complex:

> I still had to learn how to do curves and other bike tricks because if I didn't I probably would have had a bad accident!

The final sentence of Kevin's piece is also interesting to me. Possible endings for such a story written at this age would include: "I could finally ride a bike," or "That's how I learned to ride a bike," or "Was I happy!" Kevin's phrase, "I could finally have some way to get around," a phrase found in adult language concerning transportation, seems to me significant. I find it almost poignant in its expression of Kevin's desire for self-sufficiency and a measure of independence. That is, like "nice fresh hay," may be a repeated bit of adult language does not diminish its presence here. Kevin has made it his own.

Kevin's personal approach is also evident in his free-writings. One of them is a listing of activities and preferences--things he likes, things he's learned--and the second free-writing is a brief autobiography. Since the free-writing exercise stresses writing spontaneously with no interruption, I assume that topics chosen or used by children represent areas of fluency of thought, topics they feel "expressive" about. That the first-person point of view author in one story should write an autobiography for free-writing seems, after it is noticed, logical.

In all his writing, Kevin shows an eye for detail and personal involvement within a world of commonplace reality. He emerges as the personal realist of the four.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

JON

We were going to build a raft so we built one and to a great big tool box We started sailing and ran into fast waters the tools slid of into the water and we ran into a huge rock in the water it loosened the raft and we all of a sudden boom! we hit a small island it would take days before we could get back!

Jon: An Important Day

The most important day was 1957, May 13th.
That was when my life began.
It all started when my mom had my sister.
After that my mom said she didn't want any more babies.
Three years later she started getting fat like
she did with my sister.
That night my mom had to go to the hospital.
Close to midnight she had me
And that was the most important day because I was born.

Jon: "The Hunters"

Once there was a fierce tiger.
He loved to hunt.
His mother was a kind lady
but his dad was (a) mean man.
The fierce tiger had a best friend.
He was a raccoon.
His mom and dad died
and he had two brothers.
That day they went to a park where they had fights.
and sometimes they went to the vacant lot.
But that day they didn't have a fight.
So they went to a movie.
They got in a fight.
The raccoon said "Let's run away."
So they did.
The next day they stay(ed) at the park
and the raccoon killed someone because he
tried to kill the tiger.
The next day they thought it was a bad idea to
run away.
So they went home.

Jon: "Mean and Smart"

Once there was two boys named
Tad and Jon.
Tad and Jon were members of a gang.
Jon was sometimes nice
but Tad was always mean.
Sometimes Jon and Tad would get into a
fight with each other.
Tad and Jon lived in Greendale,
Wisconsin in a cemetary lot with old mattresses
that they sleep on.
The next day Jon was thinking
about leaving the gang.
But Tad would never leave.
Jon wanted to leave
but he didn't want to leave.
The next day Jon didn't go
to the fight with the other gang.
That was very smart because Tad was hurt
very badly.
and five guys died.
The next day Jon left the gang for good.
And Tad died because he went.

Jon: Free-writing One: "The Story of Marvin Major"

There once (was) a boy named Marvin Major.
He was born on a farm.
His dad's name was Louie Major
and/his/ moms name was Mae Major.
Marvin had a twin sister named Larlyn
and he had more sisters Glady, Dody
and Louis.
They all lived in Fairedale, North Dakota.
Marvin loved to be farming with his dad.
Marvin had a best friend like everybody does.
His name was Manerd.
A copel years later Marvin went to UN.D.
and he fell in love with Del Rae Underdoll.
Then Marvins dad died.

Jon: Free-writing Two: "Del Rae Underdoll"

One day Del was going to her first
day of college at UND.
When the others found out her name
they called her Rae Del and buckteeth.
After a while she got used to it.
Her next year she met a boy named Marvin Major.
She liked him the best.
That year she went for Miss Teen
and she was Miss Teen
her sister was runner up.
When she went off school she
got married to Marvin Major.
They said they only wanted two babies, a
boy and a girl.
They did.
But in 1975 they had another boy
and they almost put him in a reformatory
but they didn't.

JON: THE AMBIVALENT RELATER

Jon is at the lower end of the syntactical fluency spectrum as indicated by a 7.68 average of words per T-unit. Although much of his writing is characterized, as is common in the third grade, by subject-verb simplicity in independent clauses ("Once there was a fierce tiger. He loved to hunt."), there is evidence that his world is more complicated than that, and that he is dealing with those complications. Two general themes that can easily be derived from Jon's writing are the facts of relationships, particularly family, and a perception of emotional ambivalency that relates directly to the adult world.

FAMILY

The "important day" that Jon selects for #1 is the day of his birth and the writing refers both to his moter and his sister. "The Hunters," Jon's animal narrative, concerns itself with a tiger whose mother and father are introduced, though they have nothing to do with the action of the story, and characterized (a kind lady, a very mean man). The raccoon in the narrative, the tiger's friend, has lost his parents but still has family: "His mom and dad died and he had two brothers." There are no family references in Jon's second narrative, the story of two male friends, but both free-writings concern themselves--unusually, compared to the other students--with a continued narrative heavily oriented toward relationships. "The Story of Marvin Major" refers

to and names a father, mother, twin sister, three other sisters, and a best friend. At the end of the story, Marvin leaves for college where he falls in love with Del Rae and the story ends with Marvin's father dying. The "Del Rae Underdoll" story, Jon's second free-writing, continues to emphasize relationships. Other people's personal reactions to Del Rae are described--they make fun of her--and she is given a sister. Finally Del Rae and Marvin, from Jon's first free-writing--and he is the only student to connect the two free-writings--marry, producing two babies, a boy and a girl. At the conclusion of the story they have a third child.

All these references produce a striking number of people populating Jon's writing, significantly more than any of the other writers. Clearly, Jon's world is thickly textured with family concerns and interpersonal relationships.

AMBIVALENCY

In none of the other writers is there as much ambivalency, described and hidden, as in Jon's writing. One can imagine a family-oriented writer who would produce a world of mom-and-dad happiness, but Jon's perspective introduces a darker tone.

In his "most important day" writing, Jon portrays his birth. He refers back to his sister's birth, reporting a family fact--either manufactured by Jon or known to him--that no more children were desired! Nothing more is made of this in Jon's writing and we do not know if he perceives himself as unwanted or accidental

but the facts of the family situation are reported by Jon and are thus present in his mind.

I am not attempting a psychological study here, and hence am not attempting to discover why some references are made, but we can notice that a mother and father have died in "The Hunters" and that Marvin's father dies in "Marvin Major." The Marvin and Del Rae story ends with Marvin and Del Rae, who "only wanted two babies," having a third whom they almost put in a reformatory. They don't, but no explanation is given for their change of mind, and we are forced to remember the "extra" child theme in Jon's birth-story.

In "Mean and Smart," Jon's narrative involving two people with a conflict, ambivalency is shown with an almost literary finesse. The title refers to the two opposing characteristics of his characters. "Jon was sometimes nice but Tad was always mean" seems to me an excellent sentence for portraying the difference between his two main characters, and the "sometimes/always" division shows us a more complicated moral vision than might be expected; many children would portray a boy who was always nice and one who was always mean. The tendency in many children's writings for opposing characteristics to be absolutely opposed (nice vs. mean, smart vs. dumb) also shows us the significance of the "mean/smart" dichotomy; something more is at work here than a black and white view of the world. It is also worth noting that by giving us this title, Jon is aware that his story will deal specifically with this theme as opposed to calling

"Jon and Tad," a much more frequent choice in this group of students.

Ambivalency is given us directly, and this reference was the starting point for my own thinking about Jon's frame of reference on the world, in this sentence: "Jon wanted to leave /the gang/ but he didn't want to leave." This sentence may not seem particularly astounding to the reader but in a context of the general dualism of children's moral judgments and perceptions, the sentence shows Jon to have a finely tuned sensibility. In none of the other writings were characters presented who vacillated with the inner tensions of wanting to do something and yet not wanting to.

"Mean and Smart" ends with a moral, a lesson learned--one character dying, the other avoiding that fate. Whether this moral is part of Jon's actual sensibility regarding the world or whether it has been absorbed from a bad-guys-die-and-good-guys-learn-their-lesson format--for Jon's story comes closest to the format of a television drama than any of the other student narratives--we can at least note that he uses it, that it has a presence in his world, whether original or received.

To properly appreciate this point, the reader would be helped by knowing the general tendency of the other stories in response to this assignment. As with adult literature, we are helped to understand a given writing by studying its relationship with its author but also by viewing it in the context of peer

literature of which it is a part.

Three of the narratives of the entire group deal with problems realistically occurring in a child's life: arguments between friends that are resolved. Two concern some external disaster involving one character, in both cases the matter of falling into a lake and being saved. A third category of response, occurring in four stories, concerns external events which happen to both characters; such stories include two cases of being lost. Five stories come closer to Jon's account of two friends faced with a conflict but they are considerably less dense in their working out of the morality involved: two girls who are showoffs learn their lesson, two boys who attempt a homemade raft are rescued by a father, two boys who goof off in school realize the error of their ways, two boys who need money win a context, and, the closest in melodrama to Jon's, two teenagers drink, have a car accident, and resolve never to drink again.

This last response, comparable to Jon's writing in terms of dealing with a contemporary problem within the adult world (as differentiated from the classroom world of "showing off" or "arguing") and in terms of a moral, learn-your-lesson, conclusion still does not end, as does Jon's, in the death of one of the characters and, more importantly, the only one to show ambivalency of a character during the course of the story.

THE STORY THAT HAPPENED: THE STORY THAT DIDN'T

In reacting to the organizational structure of Jon's writings, I find the most interesting to be his two narrative pieces. The #1 and #6 writings are his shortest and the organization of these two is unexceptional, neither disorganized nor, due to their shortness, remarkable. His two free-writings, as I've mentioned, are both narrative, both simple and fluent, noticeable more for their temes of family and personal relationships than any syntactical or organizational qualities. When we compare "Mean and Smart" to "The Hunters," however, we see the difference between a story by Jon and a story which Jon is trying to write.

In "Mean and Smart," Jon uses paragraphing as a device, something that none of the other three writers attempted except at the beginning of the writing, and he uses paragraphing consistently, coherently, and purposefully. Paragraph 1 introduces the characters by name and their characteristics. Paragraph 2 is a one-sentence description of their living arrangements, paragraph 3 presents the moral dilemna of the story, and paragraph 4 concerns the "next day" where there is a fight in which Tad is badly hurt. The 5th paragraph concludes the story with Jon leaving and Tad dying. In each case these paragraphs are complete thoughts. They would be otherwise paragraphed by different writers, of course, but Jon uses them consistently and well. Even the one-sentence second paragraph has a reason for a separate

existence and is, in any case, the most complicated with three prepositional phrases and a subordinate clause.

The reader will want to refer back to Jon's "The Hunters" as I will try to refrain from extensive quoting. The first section (T-units 1-8) introduces the characters, their characteristics, the mother and father, the best friend and his family situation.

The next section can be considered as a whole for it all takes place "that day," running from T-units 9-15, but it is not a coherent whole. "That day they went to a park where they had fights" begins the action, but already Jon is starting to double back. He adds "and sometimes they went to the vacant lot" which is connected not with arriving at the park but with the subordinate clause "where they had fights." Whether Jon himself is confused at this point or not, he begins another paragraph with "But that day they didn't have a fight." One can sense Jon silently giving up on the fight-idea.

"So they went to a movie," Jon goes on, almost beginning again, the park and the vacant lot forgotten. But whether or not the movie-idea failed to inspire him, Jon returns to his first idea:"They got in a fight." Quickly, Jon again rejects fighting as the main action of his story and the raccoon suggests that they run away. "So they did," Jon reports, and I hear, behind these words, his hope that this new direction will finally come up with a story. "The next day," John begins the next paragraph, they stay at the park--back to the park again; maybe that location

wasn't such a bad idea--where the raccoon kills someone because he tried to kill the tiger. As intriguing as this new action is, it goes unexplained and undetailed. Presumably, this disaster has led the characters to reflection, for the final paragraph begins "The next day they thoyght it was a bad idea to run away" and the story concludes. We should also remember, in thinking of this writing within the context of a classroom, that Jon is running over 100 words as the tiger is killed, that this is his longest story anyway, and that time is running out for this writing assignment.

WHAT THIS TELLS US

I have attempted a fairly close analysis of a story that, compared to Jon's other narrative, does not work very effectively. In pointing out structural or literary weaknesses in "The Hunters" I am not trying to say Jon needs work or that he isn't a "good" or consistent writer. His dogged search to find a story in "The Hunters" reveals his knowledge of what will make a story, even as it eludes him.

Now what I have characterized as the more organized story happens to be the narrative with the higher T-unit rating (8.33 as compared to 6.78) and it may be that Jon's success with one element of writing, organization, influenced or was similarly caused by his success with another element, syntactical fluency. But I am warned away from an emphasis on these ratings when I realize that omitting one wonderful sentence from "Mean' and

Smart" ("Tad and Jon lived in Greendale, Wisconsin, in a cemetery lot with old mattresses that they slept on") would drop Jon's rating from 8.3 to 7.6, an indication of the over-sensitivity of the T-unit framework. One has to look at what is being said by particular constructions; clause length, types of constructions, and T-unit length cannot characterize a writer's style very precisely or helpfully.

As an example of studying what a writer has to say along with how he is saying it, let me cite these two passages:

> So they went to a movie. They got in a fight.
> The raccoon said let's run away. ("The Hunters")

> But Tad would never leave. Jon wanted to leave
> but he didn't want to leave. ("Mean and Smart")

Both passages contain three T-units, each about six words long, but, taken within the context of their stories and what is going on within these sentences, the first represents the writer's struggle to find a story, the second is a mature statement appropriate in its wording and construction for the writer's purposes and the reader's understanding.

THE AMBIVALENT RELATER

In summary, Jon shows his perspective on the world to be one of thickly textured relationships between family and friends and the world at large. This texture is also seen with a feeling for the ambivalency of existence, for inner moral dilemnas of certainty and uncertainty. Jon's writing, where it succeeds, shows us this. It is his style of relating to the world and it is a

personal style. I have not pointed out, though the reader has undoubtedly noticed, that Jon uses his own first name in "Mean and Smart" and I can relate, since the actual names have been changed, that he uses his own last name in "The Story of Marvin Major," a personalization not as frequent in these writings as one might expect. Jon's personal, descriptive, and realistic perspective involves him, in his writing, in the search for personal expressiveness and his writing successes and problems must be looked at, and discovered by, that perspective.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEN

When I went to Germany I went on four different planes. It took us 48 hr. to get there. On the way to the airport it started to hail, baseball size it, stoped about half hour later. We stayed with my dad. We went in big towers and we went around the mountains. We saw churches that were about 100 feet it seemed like. The roads were brick.

Ben: An Important Day

The most important day of my life was when
I recovered from kidney problems.
I almost died.
My first doctor said to leave it
but I think he didn't know what it was.
Finally my mom got a new doctor.
He rushed me to the emergency room right away.
I had to stay there about two weeks.
They wouldn't give me a shot when my mom
wasn't there.

Ben: "The Dog and the Cat"

Once there was a dog and a cat.
They were very good friends.
The dog/s/ name was Harry.
The cats name was Ozzie.
Harry had spots
and Ozzie had stripes.
One day in the woods they were chasing squirrels
they got lost.
They slept in a cave (that night.)
In the morning they saw a rabbit
they chased him all around
and they finally caught him
and they ate him.
When their master went hunting one day
he found them at the river.
He brought them home
and they lived happily ever after.

Ben: "Chris & Bill"

There once was a boy
his name was Chris.
He had brown hair and eyes
His friend Bill has brownish black
hair and brown eyes.
They both like to play hockey in the winter.
They are very good friends.
One day Chris and Bill went to the lake.
They were having a good time.
then Bill bumped Chris
and he fell into the water.
Chris couldn't swim
he drown.
Bill pulled him out
and his mom rushed to the hopital.
He had to stay there for a week
he almost died.
Finally after a week he went home.

Ben: Free-writing One: Germany

When I went to Germany I went on four
different planes.
It took us 48 hr. to get there.
On the way to the airport it started
to hail baseball size.
It stopped about half hour later.
We stayed with my dad.
We went in big towers
and we went around mountains.
We saw churches that were about 100 feet
it seemed like.
The roads were brick.

BEN: THE METHODICAL MATHEMATICIAN

Ben's writing shows at the lower end of the scale concerning writing fluency. The total word-count of his writings is the lowest for the group, and he has the smallest number of words per T-unit (6.76 average). It is quickly apparent that there are few subordinate clauses (none in "Chris and Ben," one in "The Dog and the Cat," three in "An Important Day") but, since they are present at all we can see that he "knows" them. This is not a matter, then, of a lack of syntactical knowledge but a point of view which does not yet relate to those structures as readily as some of the other students. This point of view contains the elements of extreme methodicalism and a sense of one-by-one logic that the other writers do not completely share.

ORDER AND LOGIC

The beginning of "The Dog and the Cat" is interesting in that it proceeds, main clause by main clause, to establish character in a series of logical steps, from specie ("there was a dog and a cat") to their relationship ("they were very good friends") to the names ("The dog's name was Harry. The cat's name was Ozzie") to a physical description, using the names established in the prior sentences ("Harry had spots. Ozzie had stripes"). The ordering is perfectly preserved: the title lists the dog as first, the cat as second, and we can see that the structure of Ben's beginning is an alternative 1,2,1,2,1,2. There is an almost painful methodicalness to this ordering, a dogged learning of how-to-write-a-

story that resembles the other students work--one could call them generic beginnings--but which is noticeably more sparse, more thinly textured.

In what I have entitled "Chris and Ben" (Ben left it untitled but did include his own name as one of the characters) Ben uses the same step-by-step method with one character at a time. "There once was a boy. His name was Chris. He had brown hair and blue eyes". This is followed by the almost surprisingly fluent "His friend, Ben, has brownish black hair and brown eyes" which contains one of the few appositives of all the students' writings. Two sentences of the boy's relationship are given and the story begins, ("One day Chris and Ben went to the lake") about 40% into the writing, a normal percentage for these writers, all of whose "beginnings" extend almost halfway into the total length of the story.

Ben's beginnings, then, although obviously lacking in syntactic exploration so they give the effect of being plodding and slow are consistent and orderly.

FACT AND EMOTION

There is a curious emotion-less quality within Ben's writing that is striking. There are no emotion words or indicators of emotion--not even the ubiquitous exclamation point of some young writers--in Ben's description of the accident in "Chris and Ben." The verb "rushing" to the hospital indicates some energy and "he almost died" is certainly a serious statement, but nothing emotionally overt can be found.

There is similarly, a lack of emotionalism in "The Dog and the Cat." "They got lost" can be presumed to contain negative emotions but these are not indicated and there is likewise no particular detail in the events, nothing harrowing which would give the reader the feeling of desire to be found. They are simply found, passively, by their master and taken home where they live, conventionally, "happily ever after."

Ben recounts the facts in both of his narratives but neither details them nor indicates their significance to the reader. He seems in a sense, to be a reluctant writer.

Emotion is repressed, or at least not expressed, in Ben's "Most Important Day" which relates a personally significant event, a kidney operation. Although Ben announces the most important day as the recovery from his kidney operation, most of the writing goes back in time to recount events prior to the recovery. "I almost died" occurs in this writing (echoing a similar line in Chris and Ben regarding drowning) and we can certainly take this as emotionally significant to the writer. Nevertheless there still seems to be a hesitance at outward expression. The last sentence embodies a complaint ("They wouldn't give me a shot when my mom wasn't there") which obviously refers to pain and not being able to get relief but in a curiously indirect way, the pain itself not being explicitly referred to.

BEN FREED AT LAST

I have not here systematically presented the students' free-writings which, since they did not have a specific goal, cannot

be taken as illustrative of the writers' sense of organization or detail. I have noted that Jon's free-writing consisted of narrative and that Kevin's were personal lists and an autobiography. Ben's one free-writing, however, sheds more light on his inner processes than any of his other writings.

Ben's longest writings were the two narratives but this free-writing, which recounts a trip to Germany, is his third longest. The free-writing exercise also seemed to release more fluency. Words in prepositional phrases, clauses and adjectives account for almost half of his total words (44%) in this writing, higher than his narratives (28% and 31%) but lower than his expository account of a most important day (47%). Ben uses introductory phrases ("On the way to the airport") which are not frequent in others' writings, including different clause structures (2 out of the 6 total for all Ben's writings).

It is interesting to note the difference between Ben's performance on expository and narrative writings and, certainly, the free-writing exercise in terms of syntactical fluency. What is also apparent in this free-writing is the amount of things noticed and detailed. Ben specifies "four different planes" and that it took them 48 hours to get there. The size of the hail is described ("baseball size") and that it stopped a half hour later. The sizes of objects are mentioned ("big towers," "around the mountains," "churches that were about 100 feet it seemed like") which shows Ben's appreciation for, and expression of, matters of quantity in size and time.

The amount of energy released in this free-writing exercise for Ben can help offset our impression of him gained from the narratives--that he is not simply a syntactically limited, reluctant writer but that his perspective on the world, a perspective characterized by observation of quantities, was not released either by himself or the assignments. Perceptions of quantity, whether of time or of size in space, and a logical, methodical approach to things have caused me to consider Ben as the methodical mathematician of language in this group.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CELIA

Once there was a cat named Oscar. Oscar was a white and gold striped cat who was very nice. The only time Oscar bit was when he gets in fights. Oscar liked getting petted and also liked sleeping with his owners at night. However, his owners had another pet. it was a gibble. The gibbles name was Friskey. Friskey was locked up in a cage all time, he couldn't

Celia: An Important Day

One day my throat was very sore.
My mom called the doctor because I wouldn't
eat anything it was so sore.
We made an appointment to see my doctor.
My doctor said I should have my tonsils taken out.
I was very frightened because I didn't know
what was going to happen.
I went to the hospital and got my room.
I was going to stay there for a week.
A few days before my surgery, a girl
took me on a tour through the hospital
to show me where I was going and everything.
A couple days later I got my tonsils out.
The next day I went home and watched cartoons.

Celia: "The Cat and the Gerbil"

Once there was a cat named Oscar.
Oscar was a white and gold-striped cat who was
very nice.
The only time Oscar bit was when he gets in fights.
Oscar liked getting petted and also liked sleeping
with his owners at night.
However, his owners had another pet.
It was a gerbil.
The gerbil's name was Friskey.
Frisky was locked up in a cage all /the/ time.
He couldn't walk around in the livingroom or
bedroom like Oscar did.
But Friskey liked his cage,
it had a wheel that he could run on.
The setting takes place in ahouse where it is
very nice in there.
The cat didn't have a problem (but the gerbil did,)
he was getting tired of just running on his wheel
in the cage.
One day their owners brought in a bird.
The cat went wild.
As soon as the bird came in the cat pounced
on it and killed it!
One day the owners son said "Our gerbil looks sick."
Friskey was sick,
he was sick because he was always locked up in a cage.
Somehow the owners found out that the gerbil wanted
to be with the cat.
Soon the owners let Friskey out.
and he went straight to the cat where he was sleeping
and he fell asleep on the cat's leg.

Celia: "Jason and Jack"

Once upon a time there were two people.
there names was Jason and Jack.
Jason and Jack were brothers.
they are very nice people too
Jason and Jack lived in a house in
Grand Forks, N.D.
Both of them were 18 years old.
Jason and Jack went to movies a lot.
They always took one person with them.
Jason and Jack had a problem.
They always went to a movie
and they went every night.
They were losing a lot of money on movies
and they had to save the money to pay taxes.
One day it was tax day
and Jason and Jack didn't have any money.
They got taken to jail
but one of their parents bailed them out.
Jason said he was not going to a movie again.
Of course Jack said that too.
One day Jason and Jack went to a movie,
after the movie they came out to the parking lot and
found...that their car was gone!
They had to walk home in the dark where they could get lost!
Luckily they didn't get lost on this extra dark night.
One day Jason and Jack found out that they could win
15 million dollars'
They scratched the game and won.
They were instant millionaires!
The End

Celia: Free Writing One: Tonsils

One day I had a very bad sore throte.
We went to the clinic
and the doctor said I needed my tonsils out.
A week later we went to the hospital.
When I got to my room I looked around
and I saw an adjustable bed, (and) a big box
with controls on it that controlled the TV
It was fun there in the hospital playing
with the bed and stuff like that.
I also had a roomate in my room where
he sat right across from me.
And I liked playing with him.
His name was Troy.
The only thing I didn't
like about him was he was always cried.
When the nurse came to give him his shot
he locked himself in the bathroom.
After I got my tonsils out they let me
go home the next day which was Saturday.

CELIA: THE STRUGGLING WRITER

Celia represents the highest rated writer in terms of the syntactical fluency referred to in this study, both in her total output (919 words) and in words per T-unit (9.57). In the non-narrative writings, Celia's prepositional phrases, adjectives, and subordinate clauses account for almost half of the total number of words. Her percentage is less in the two narratives, but those show a fluency of struggling invention that characterizes her as a writer in action, a writer in progress. Because these qualities are shown in all her writings I chose to deal with them as qualities, citing examples from several sources.

EPISODE INVENTION

Most of the writers discussed here were satisfied with a fairly simple one-action narrative. Although Celia is clearly intent on one problem per story, her inventiveness in both construction and in language sometimes leads her astray.

In "Jason and Jack" the problem is that the two male characters go to movies so much they are losing money. Celia does not leave them with an abstract problem, however. Tax day is coming up and they cannot pay their taxes. One can imagine an ending here, some way for the boys to get money, but Celia continues with her narration. They go to jail and are rescued by their parents. Such a conclusion would be enough for most children. A conflict

has been entered upon and resolved, a lesson learned.

Celia, however, continues. Jason and Jack return to the movies and four sentences are given to describing a new situation and presumably a new problem, their car being gone and the resulting walk home "in the dark where they could get lost." They don't, however, and the narrative skips ahead with a new "one day" in which Jason and Jack win 15 million dollars in a context and are now millionaires. The four basic sections of this narrative, then, embody three specifically different episodes, showing a much more energetic inventiveness of action than the other writers.

In "The Cat and the Gerbil," Celia's tendency to look for new episodes in her writing causes an even more obvious detour. After a lengthy introduction of characters and situation, Celia announces the conflict ("He was getting tired of just running on his wheel in the cage") in T-unit 15, only to swerve to an interruptive episode. The owners bring in a bird and the cat pounces on it to kill it. This three-unit episode then gives way to the main flow of the story and the final seven units of resolution to the problem.

Although theoretically such an interruption could be considered as only that, possibly showing an erratic perceptiveness on the writer's part as to what she is actually doing, I believe, given Celia's other characteristics, that it shows an energy for invention which is both noticeable and commendable.

LITERARY AWARENESS

Several times in her narratives, Celia uses phrase and devices which show her awareness of writing as a literary product that she is engaged in creating.

In "The Cat and the Gerbil," Celia uses one of the few transition markers found in these writings. After a lengthy introduction of one of the characters, Oscar, she writes: "However, his owners had another pet." Unremarkable as a transition device, its mere presence is noticeable.

Another example of Celia's growing understanding of literary conventions is "The setting takes place in a house" which, although grammatically irregular from an adult point of view, nevertheless shows her knowledge of terminology for the parts of a story.

By T-unit 13, aware that the story was to show a problem Celia announces "The cat didn't have a problem but the gerbil did." Here she is referring outside of the writing to the assignment and though this might be considered a lapse in her narrative writing, I see it as illustrative of her awareness of what she is doing.

When the owner's son says the gerbil looks sick, Celia, as the omniscient author, states "Friskey was sick"--and one can almost hear her vocal underlining of "was." As the author, Celia is aware that she knows something the characters do not and the discrepancy is something to deal with. Faced with this problem, and the fact that, 280 words into the story, time is

running out, Cela brushes aside the problem: "Somehow the owners found out that the gerbil wanted to be with the cat." As with several other phrases in Celia's writing, this apparent weakness, failing to provide a satisfactory answer, masks a strength. Celia knows there must be some way for the owners to find out and that she, as the writer, is supposed to supply it. Many other writers her age would solve this by simply saying "So the owners found out;" Celia, with "somehow," shows her recognition of the writer's responsibility even if she is temporarily unable to satisfy it.

This awareness can also be seen in "Jason and Jack" where Celia, the omniscient author, writes: "Jason said he was not going to a movie again. Of course, Jack said that too." Her phrase "of course" shows a double-awareness of writer's and reader's perceptions about the characters. Similar to "Somehow the owners found out" is this story's "Luckily they didn't get lost" as they walked home. Again, a less aware student would simply have written "But they didn't get lost." Celia realizes this is lucky and both shows and somewhat apologizes for it in the same adverb.

SYNTACTICAL STRUGGLING

LIke episodic interruptions, Celia's syntactical struggling shows us a writer engaged in the process of growing. There are only a few examples of this in her writing, but there are none in the others' writings.

Consider this sentence: "The setting takes place in a house where it is very nice in there." This seems to be a muddle as Celia switches from the two-clause statement (The setting takes place in a house. It is very nice in there.) to the use of the subordinate clause (The setting takes place in a house where it is very nice.). The even simpler, temptingly adult version, "The setting takes place in a very nice house," does not, I feel, do justice to Celia's perceptions. I believe she is not describing a house which is nice but a house in which it is nice, and her apparent muddle between grammatical constructions can be seen as an attempted solution.

A similar conflict occurs in her free-writing: "I had a room-mate in my room where he sat right across from me" which seems to embody the same grammatical alternatives. A third example is Celia's mental combination of the possible "The only thing I didn't like about him was that he was always crying" and "I didn't like one thing about him. He always cried" into the apparent muddle of "The only thing I didn't like about him was he was always cried."

Thus, Celia in these examples is not so much "poor" at the grammar involved, she is "bettering" her grammar by an active search for more expressiveness.

INTERNALIZATION

Celia has an ability for internalization, not only for her role as a writer, but as a perceiver of the world. The fact that

she picked having her tonsils out as a subject both for the "important day" writing and for one of her free-writings shows that she retains experience and considers writing as a way of exploring that experience. It is not hard to imagine most students saying "I've already written about that" when asked to repeat a subject.

Both versions of her hospital experience are syntactically similar. It is interesting to note that her more expository writing, the more ordered, divides the event into smaller units (does Celia feel that this shows the event in a more organized way?) but that, her personal expressiveness released through the concept of free-writing, she prefers to concentrate on the experience of being in the hospital. During the free-writing exercise, Celia spends more time and space detailing a particular scene, her hospital room, with its furnishings, friend, and what he did. This writing is more "detailed," then whereas the "important day" writing called for an organized sequence of time. Both the fact that she chose the same topic and that she treated it differently shows her perceptiveness of the flexibility of the writing process.

Strongly engaged with writing and with her own perceptions of the world, Celia's work shows the struggle of her energetic expressiveness.

CONCLUSION

In a study of this sort it is impossible to give the reader a summary of what has been said. Each detail observed in these four children's writings has had a part in the overall analysis and the conclusion.

My attempt at first was to analyze children's phenomenological perceptions of the world through their writings and to use those perspectives to "explain" their differences in syntactical usage. All of the children possessed a normal range of writing ability. Ben, the lowest rated T-unit writer with 6.7, is above the mean Kellogg Hunt discovered in his study of fourth graders (6.0). I might even mention that I analyzed 100 words of my own narrative writing and achieved a T-unit rating of 11.1, about the same as Celia's free-writing exercise. All of the children could use adjectives, prepositional phrases, and a number of subordinate clauses; they could also present written material in an orderly manner.

What I found was that the phenomenological perspectives were much more important in understanding the writing than was syntactical usage. What distinguishes these children is their individual windows on the world, windows of perception and expression which effect what comes in and what goes out. Each of these writers has a style, both of writing and of being in the world, which needs to be understood: the Writer, the Mathematician, The Relater, the Realist. And there are sixteen other children in that classroom with their own individual names.

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